

September 14, 2009 (Monday) 10:00-11:00,

Speech(2) “Planet of Hope” Vision

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Life on earth is a cycle of photosynthetic organisms producing oxygen, which creates living organisms, which in turn re-generate their environment.

Now mankind is trying to create a new type of earth and as a result, is facing several challenges – limited resources, overpopulation and climate changes.

The depletion of petroleum fuel is imminent, requiring us to design a low-carbon, non-fossil fuel society within the next 10 years. In terms of population, approximately 10% is concentrated in cities, making cities perhaps the biggest risk for humankind. Society is aging and there is a drop in birthrates. For example, in Japan, by the year 2050, the elderly will account for 40% of the total population, creating an unprecedented demographic composition. Within 5 years, in the Tokyo metropolitan area alone, the elderly population will exceed 11 million. How can we manage this crisis, or better yet, turn it into an opportunity? This is one of the most important questions facing humankind.

What is the state of the earth right now? The ability to look at the earth from outer space in real time has been made possible by something I call, “Tangible Earth”. It was developed to help children better understand the real situation of the earth because it is the children who will need to deal with the earth’s problems in the future. “Tangible Earth” displays such information as sunshine conditions, cloud images, pollution and so on.

Looking at this now we can see that a typhoon has thankfully missed Tokyo. However, we can also see that the typhoon is wrecking damage elsewhere. This and other such information enable us to better understand what is happening to the earth as a total. In reality, all the countries of the world

share the same fate. Pollutants from one country affect not only that country, but the world over. Clearly, in terms of environmental issues, global governance that goes beyond national borders is absolutely necessary.

Global warming is a serious issue. The earth is not warming in a uniform manner, but rather, the North Pole, Siberia, the Himalayas and Tibet in particular are experiencing rapidly rising temperatures. The melting of glaciers in the Arctic and other oceans has caused a rise in the sea level, which has increased the risk of flooding in not just the Pacific area, but in major cities, such as Tokyo, London and Shanghai. It is believed that this rise in the sea level can also affect the Gulf Stream to create cooling trends in Europe and the Middle East. The melting in the Himalayas and Tibet has accelerated in recent years, deforestation in the Amazon and Indonesia is a serious problem, and on a global level, global warming will soon create a crisis in water resources and food supply.

In such a situation, it is vital that we have a comprehensive view of our situation on earth. That view can become a source of hope. By sharing an earth monitoring system, such as this digital globe, among the world's political and economic leaders, perhaps important political and economic decisions will be made with the earth in mind. With climate change as an impetus, mankind may develop a bold new innovation just as it did when it created a culture of agriculture. Alternative energies, such as wind power, solar power, and others are already being developed at a rapid pace, as well as totally new technologies, such as ocean thermal energy conversion. The appropriate use of such technologies will become increasingly important, not only for its benefits to the earth, but for our children who represent the future.

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